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Horatiana Cantica Miscella

By
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Horatiana

Three

Stet Capitolium.

WHETHER he sings of high romance,
Or hymns the everlasting Sire,
Or suits his lay to choral dance,
Or scourges forms of base desire,
Or paints the lady of his choice,
Horace is still a living Voice.

Your sweetly smiling Lalage,
Whose spirit turned a wolf to flight,
Your little farm by Tivoli,
Bandusia's fountain crystal-bright,
Your haunts, your hospitalities—
Horace, they're all before our eyes.

Orbilius flogged you when at school;
You have our fullest sympathy,
For we remember a ferule,
That smote us oft and lustily;
Would it had gotten into us
A measure of your genius.

You sang how Regulus put aside
The crowds encumbering his return,
Refused his wife's kiss, and denied
Her plea with answer curt and stern;
"Rome must be saved; let cowards die"—
We hear it yet—that haught reply.

How Paulus and how Cato died,
Too staunch to fly, too proud to yield;
How stout Marcellus turned the tide
Of war in many a foughten field;
How yeomen played heroic parts—
You've stamped it all upon our hearts.

Four

They left their farms to fight; they braved
All pains of death; and, if they fell,
What mattered it, so Rome were saved?
Her weal safeguarded, all was well.
The State must stand, tho' men may die—
That was Old Rome's philosophy.

You made them household words—the names
Of those who fought and fell for Rome—
And you—your memory lives, and claims
Place at their side in every home;
Your bones lie on a Roman hill,
Horace, but you are with us still.



Puellis Idoneus

Od. III. 26

HORACE had many themes; his rimes
At times clomb Helicon's peak; at times
His Muse just sported;
He sang of Gods, of mighty men,
Of wines, of rustic joys, of ten
Damsels he courted.

It seems he had a lot of flames
From first to last; his list of names
Is gey an' long;
Were they real living demoiselles,
Or quite imaginary belles—
Just pegs for song?

Some anyhow were real, and two
Adorned, as gentle souls and true,
His poetry—
The kindly Cinara—rapt, alas!
From earth untimely—and the lass
Named Lalage.

Militavi

PYRRHA bound up her golden hair;
For whom? Well, Horace didn't know;
Well dressed yet simply, she was fair,
But was she constant? No. And so
Horace, shipwrecked by her of yore,
Thanked Heaven that he'd got safe to shore.

* * * *

When Lydia praised Telephus,
Horace, indignant, made a fuss;
He said that scratches on her lips
And shoulders meant beauty's eclipse;
She'd better far have stuck to him;
Then she'd have been unscratched and trim.

* * * *

Glycera's face was slippery—
Too slippery for stedfast gaze;
Its beauty twinkled, seemingly,
Or dazzled as a flash-light's rays.
Each ray was as a Cupid's dart,
And Horace played the target's part.

* * * *

As Horace sorrowed that in battle
He'd left his shield, and fled to Rome,
Came Lalage, and with sweet prattle
Shifted his thoughts to joys of home;
Which shows that prattlings sweet may be
Sometimes as good as poetry.

I hope that Lalage was not
All talk—her name implies a tongue—
If so, she'd better far have got
Hold of a lyre, and sweetly sung;
Ah well—lest Horace should get rattled,
She smiled as sweetly as she prattled.

* * * *

Chloe was like a fawn, so shy
That Horace couldn't get a talk in;
She wouldn't list his poetry,
Nor with him would she go a-walkin';
Tied to her mother's apron-strings
She "slacked," so Horace sadly sings.

* * * * *
A freedwoman, named Myrtale,
Ruled Horace for a season;
Her sway was as a tyranny,
A triumph of unreason.
Out upon Venus! The bronze yoke
That linked them was her cruel joke.

* * * * *
Barine, beauty and coquette,
Moved Horace to despair;
She broke all promises, and yet
Grew every day more fair.
What were the gods about that they
Laughed at it? Horace couldn't say.

* * * * *
Lyce—what of her? Horace prayed
She might grow old. And why?
Because she scorned his serenade,
And mocked his lover's cry.
The gods assented, and she grew
Not only old, but ugly too.

* * * * *
Of Cinara we only know
What Horace says of her—that she
Was good—kindly, he meant—and so
He flourished 'neath her dynasty.
What had become of her? Ah, she
Was then only a memory.

* * * * *
Horace to Phyllis. Last thou art
Of all my loves, and last shalt be;
Lift not too high thy hopes; the heart
Of Telephus is not for thee.
Come to my arms; come to my home,
And sing my songs. Ah, Phyllis, come!

Horace. Od. I. 4

NOW loosed is Winter's cruel grip; now Spring
and Western wind

Bring welcome change; the windlass hauls dry
keels down to the sea;

No longer stalls make glad the herds, no longer
fires the hind;

No longer stand the meadows white with hoar-
frost's argentry.

Beneath the moon now Cytherean Venus leads her
choirs;

Graces and Nymphs, a comely troop, ring hand
in hand their ring;

Now this, now that, foot beats the ground; while
Cyclops' furnace-fires

Glow, as fierce Vulcan fans the flames, and bids
the hammers swing.

Now is it well to twine trim locks with myrtle, or
with flowers,

Brought forth by fields, now thawed, as from a
store of treasures hid;

Now is it well to sacrifice to Faunus, in dim bowers
Of shady groves, a lamb maybe, or, if he will, a kid.

Marching with step impartial, Death's pale Presence
raps its call

At doors of rich and poor alike. Wealth, Sestius,
is yours;

But life's brief span cuts short the range of hope
for one and all;

And even now a gloom of night and storied Manes
lours

O'er you, and Pluto's shadowy halls expect your
shade anon.

Once there, no longer shall you cast the dice to
settle who

Shall rule the feast, nor count young Lycidas a
paragon,

Whom all the lads now envy, and the lasses soon
shall woo.

Nine

Od. I. 10

GRANDSON of Atlas eloquent,
Mercury, skilful to refine
Primaeval manners insolent
By speech and seemly discipline—

Thee will I sing, of mighty Jove
Herald and of the gods, whose deft
Hand bent the lyre: adept, for love
Of fun, to steal and hide the theft.

Phoebus once threatened thee unless
His stolen beeves returned anon—
Ah, naughty boy!—scolded thee, yes,
Yet laughed— his quiver too had gone.

With thee for guide rich Priam made
His way unseen past Atreus' sons,
Past Phthian fires, thro' the blockade
Of Troy-beleaguering legions.

Kind souls find under thy convoy
Blest homes; thy gold wand's waving gleam
Shepherds the shades—who art the joy
Of gods inferne and gods supreme.

Od. I. 12

C LIO, what man's, what hero's, fame
Art fain with shrill-toned pipe to sing,
Or lyre: what god's—that so his name,
Flung back by echo's laugh, shall ring

Or in the shades of Helicon,
Or upon Pindus' heights, or chill
Haemus, whence woods swept blindly on
At tuneful Orpheus' heels, whose skill,

His mother's grace, made his art strong
To stay torrent and hurricane—
Made it a charm to draw along
The listening oaks that heard his strain?

Whose praise shall sooner claim my song
Than his, whom gods and men obey:
Whose seasons spin the world along,
Above, below, with tempering sway?

Naught greater than himself proceeds
From him; naught next his being is,
Or like it; yet her mighty deeds
Give Pallas nearest rank to his.

I will not let thy prowess go,
Liber, unsung—no, nor thy fame,
O Virgin huntress, nor thy bow,
Phoebus, whose shafts miss not their aim.

Alcides too, and Leda's sons—
Famed cavalier, famed pugilist—
I'll hymn—to mariners twin suns
Of hope, for tumbling breakers whist,

Soon as their white stars shine, and fall
Back from the rocks: rude tempests cease:
Clouds flee: waves' threats subside, and all,
Since such their will, is calm and peace.

What name comes next? I hesitate—
Romulus, Numa's quiet sway,
Proud Tarquin's tyranny, Cato's fate—
The death that is his fame for aye?

Regulus, Scaurus, Paulus wight,
All reckless of his mighty soul
When Carthage won, in words of light
Grateful I'll set on honour's roll.

Fabricius, Curius unshorn,
Camillus—these stern penury
Reared, sons of toil, and yeomen-born,
To be true sons of chivalry.

As thro' unnoticed ages grows
The tree, so grows Marcellus' fame;
As moon 'mid lesser lights, so glows
The Julian star with brightest flame.

Father and guardian of our race,
Great Saturn's son, Fate gives to thee
Charge of great Caesar; of thy grace,
Reign thou; let him vicegerent be.

Whether he breaks their threats, and leads
In well-won triumph Parthia's hosts,
Or smites Chinese and Indian breeds,
Who dwell below the Orient's coasts,

Beneath thee let him rule the world
In justice, while thy ponderous car
Shakes heaven, and while thy lightnings hurled
On unchaste groves make holy war.

Od. I. 14

SHIP of the State, new waves will bear
Thee back to sea. What doest thou? Fight
To make the port; thy sides are bare
Of oars—ah, seest thou not thy plight?

Sprung by the swift South wind thy mast
And sail-yards groan; thy straining back,
Unfrapped by ropes, can scarce outlast
The sea's too tyrannous attack.

Thy sails are all unsound; thou hast
No gods whose guardianship thou mayst claim,
When swept by some fresh tempest-blast;
What tho' thou boastest race and fame,

As Pontic pine, and nobly born,
Gay poops bring mariners no cheer;
Beware lest thou become a scorn—
A laughing-stock for winds to jeer.

Of late did'st vex and tire my soul;
Now dear, dost still disturb my ease;
Prithee, avoid the seas that roll
Between the shining Cyclades.

Od. I. 16

O FAIRER than your mother fair,
Put whatsoever end you please
To my lampoons—no matter where,
In furnace or in Hadria's seas.

Not Dindymene—no, nor he
Who sits upon his Pythian seat—
So shakes priests' souls with ecstasy;
Not Liber; not so fiercely beat

Their cymbals Corybants, as grim ire
Rages; which fears nor Noric steel,
Nor wreckstrewn sea, nor savage fire,
Nor Jove's down-rush with flash and peal.

Prometheus, forced to add a part
Cut from each creature to our clay
Primaeval, grafted on our heart
A mad lion's might—so legends say.

Passions once laid Thyestes low
In ruin, and have come to be
Root-cause of utter overthrow
To lofty cities, presently

Ploughed under by some haughty foe.
Restrain your wrath; me too, alas!
A hot heart tempted long ago,
In life's sweet youth; mad that I was,

I dashed off libels. Courtesy,
Not rudeness, now shall be my part,
If but, my taunts withdrawn, you'll be
My friend, and give me back your heart.

Od. I. 20

WINE of a common Sabine brand
In moderate cups your thirst shall slake—
Wine stored and sealed by my own hand
In an old jar of Grecian make,

When from the theatre rang out
Your praise, dear knight Maecenas, till
Your native banks returned the shout,
And echoes laughed from Vatican hill.

Then wine from a Calenian press,
And Caecuban, shall cheer your soul;
Falernian grapes, I must confess,
And Formian, temper not my bowl.

Od. I. 26

THE Muses' friend, I'll cast all fear
And grief to wanton winds, to bear
Where Cretan billows roll,
Utterly careless what dread king
Rules 'neath the cold North, or what thing
Frights Tiridates' soul.

O thou, to whom fresh springs are dear,
Nymph of Pimplea's fountain clear,
Weave of thy grace a wreath;
Weave it for Lamia, my friend;
Weave it of sunny flowers that blend
Thy sweetness with their breath.

Honours that I can pay are naught,
Apart from thee—the gracious thought
That tunes my new cithern;
Bid it with Lesbian quill—the gift
Were worthy thee and thine—uplift
This man to life eterne.

Od. II. 3

REMEMBER, Dellius, doomed to die
Some day, to keep a level mind
When times are hard, nor pridefully
Exalt your horn when Fate seems kind—

Aye, doomed to die, whether each dawn
Renews your griefs, or days of rest
Comfort you, couched on some far lawn,
With old Falernian of the best.

Why does white poplar interlace
With mighty pine its welcoming shade?
Why does fleet rivulet toil to race
Adown the maze its frets have made?

Bid them bring hither wines, nards, blooms—
Rose-blooms, sweet all too brief a space—
While means and youth and the dark looms
Of the three Sisters grant us grace.

You'll leave parked hall and villa fair,
With yellow Tiber rolling by;
All that you bought you'll leave; your heir
Will own the wealth you heaped on high.

Rich scion of Inachus, or poor
And lowliest-born, with heaven's bare ceil
For roof—no matter, Orcus dour
Will set on you his ruthless heel.

One bourn awaits us all; each lot,
Tossed in the urn, or soon, or late,
Leaps forth, and—doom that changes not—
Exiles us on the bark of Fate.

Od. II. 14

A^H Postumus, my Postumus, the fleeting years
roll by;
Wrinkles and ever nearing eld stay not for piety:
Relentless they, relentless death's unconquered tyranny,
Ah no; tho' with three hecatombs of bulls each day
you try
To soften Pluto's tearless heart, whose sad stream's
custody
Prisons thrice ample Geryon and Tityon, you must die.
For, friend, that river must be crossed by each and
every one
Of all whom Earth's large bounty feeds and rears
beneath the sun:
By kings, by needy husbandmen, by every mother's son.
Vainly we seek to shun the risks and threats of
bloody war:
The rage of waves that swell and break where
Hadria's billows roar;
Vainly we fear the autumnal blights that blow from
Afric's shore.
No soul may miss Cocytus' gloom—the languid
streams that roil
Moaning along: the Danaid brides whose shame
naught can assoil:
Sisyphus, son of Aeolus, doomed to unending toil.
Earth, home, sweet wife—these must you leave—
aye, all that you hold dear;
And, of the trees that you, their short-lived master,
cherished here,
Only the hateful cypress shall at last attend your bier.
Your Caecuban—a hundred keys once locked it in
your store—
A better wine than sacred feasts into priests' gob-
lets pour—
A worthier heir shall drink it, and its pride shall
stain the floor.

Eighteen

Od. III. 5

THAT Jove is lord of all above
His thunders and his lightnings show;
Persia and Britain tamed shall prove
Augustus demigod here below.

That ever a soldier Crassus led
Should wed—ah Senate! ah the sin!—
A barbarous mate to shame his bed,
And grow old with her hostile kin,

Serving a Median king—and he
A Marsian or Apulian—
Forgetting—ah, that it should be!—
The name that linked him to his clan:

The shields borne by the Salii:
The civic cloak, and—type of home—
The Vestal fires that never die—
Tho' Jove still keeps the gates of Rome!

'Twas fear of this made Regulus
Reject base terms of peace with scorn,
Inferring precedents ruinous
To generations yet unborn,

If prisoners were not left to die
Unpitied. "Punic shrines display,"
Quoth he, "our eagles—have not I
Seen them—seen weapons snatched away

"From warriors' unresisting hands—
Seen on free backs arms twist askew,
Gates left unbarred, and enemy lands,
Swept by our war, now tilled anew?

"Ransomed by gold, doubtless, a man
Returns the bolder! Ah, 'tis loss
Added to foul disgrace; for can
Dyed wool regain its native gloss?

"Nor does true valour, once expelled,
Care to replace poltroonery.
Free the snared stag from toils that held
It captive—will it fight? Will he,

"Who to a treacherous foeman knelt,
Be brave, and in a second strife
Crush him—who on his shoulders felt
The thongs, nor fought, but clung to life?

"He, knowing not whence true life is won,
Confounded peace with war. O shame!
O mighty Carthage, throned upon
The wrecks of Italy's fair fame!"

His chaste wife's kiss, the lads he loved,
He put aside, in outlaw's wyse—
So runs the tale—and all unmoved
Bent sternly down his manly eyes;

Till by new counsel he made strong
The Fathers' wavering will, and straight
Went forth, his sorrowing friends among,
A glorious exile, to his fate.

He knew what tortures were in store
For him, and yet he pushed his way
Thro' troops of hindering kinsfolk, nor,
Tho' crowds beset him, brooked delay,

As tho', some clients' law-suit tried
And won, he sought a holiday
By green Venafro's country-side,
Or Dorian Taranto's bay.

Od. III. 30

LO, I have reared a monument that bronze shall
not outlast,

More lofty than the pyramids that despots piled
of yore;

Its strength defies devouring rain, defies the un-
governed blast

Of Aquilo, the wind that blows from where the
North seas roar;

It shall survive when the unnumbered tale of years
is past,

When days and months have ceased to be, and
Time shall be no more.

There's that in me which shall not die; that which
is most of me

Shall win where the death-goddess has no part
nor lot; my fame

Shall grow with increase ever new as the ages yet
to be

Uplift their voice in praise of me, and magnify my
name,

While up the Capitol shall climb, in solemn com-
pany,

Pontiff and they whose silent care guards Vesta's
holy flame.

It shall be said of me, who, where Ofanto storms
along

Raging, and where o'er arid realms ruled Daunus
in old days,

Waxed strong from low estate, that I, first of all
sons of song,

Married to modes of Italy Aeolia's lyric lays.

Be proud of right, Melpomene, and, for to thee be-
long

The honours, will to crown my brow with great
Apollo's bays.

Od. IV. 7

THE snows have fled; returns to every mead
Its grass, its crown of leaves to every tree;
Earth changes with the change; at lessened speed,
Within their banks, the rivers seek the sea.

The Graces and the Nymphs with never a fear
All naked dance the happy hours away;
Look not for things immortal—warns the year,
Aye, and the hour that steals the gracious day.

West winds abate the frosts; summer anon
Tramples on Spring, itself to disappear
As Autumn sheds its fruits; then, Autumn gone,
Winter comes back to close the working-year.

Yet, fast as moons wane in the sky, as fast
They wax; but we, poor mortals, when we fare
Whither the mighty ones of earth have passed,
Are naught but dust here, naught but shadows
there.

Who knows whether the gods who reign above
Add a new day's span to the sum of this?
Live while you live; that which the soul you love,
Your self, enjoys, your greedy heir will miss.

Once you are dead, once Minos, judge of men,
Has fixed by doom august your destiny,
Not rank, Torquatus, shall restore you then;
Not eloquence; not even piety.

Dian despite, Hippolytus remains,
Chaste tho' he was, hidden in nether gloom;
Nor can the love of Theseus break the chains
That hold Peirithous in dark Lethe's tomb.

Cantica

Twenty-three

Jenny

WHAT'S in a name? Her name is Jenny,
And of all girls I know not any
Who can with her compare;
For Oh! her eyes are bright as dew;
And Oh! her face is fair to view;
And her hair is golden hair.

But I don't think half 'as much, I swear,
Of her fair sweet face, and her golden hair,
As I think of her loyal heart;
For its beauty is beauty that can't grow old;
And its truth is truer than truest gold,
And will hold me till death us part.

She went for a walk with me one day,
And Oh! I didn't know what to say;
I was bashful, shy, tongue-tied;
But we looked in each other's eyes, and they
Said all, I guess, that there was to say,
Except what our lips implied.

And so to me the name of Jenny
Spells wife and love and home and many
A year, I hope, of bliss;
So a name may have in it paradise;
And a tale may be told by silent eyes,
And explained by a silent kiss.

Gardes Joyeuses

WE built joy-castles on the sand,
As Prince and Princess of our land,
And warders of her shores;
We'd hardly come to our full growth
In those far days; in fact we both
Wore frocks and pinafores.

Refrain.

O we played together once,
And I should be a dunce,
If I didn't want to play with her for ever and a day;
But, since our life is not
All a play-time by a lot,
I would work for her and with her, and would
cherish her for aye.

I'm building castles still, but they
Are in the air as yet, and may
Remain a dream-creation;
She, only she, can bid them take
Shape, for I build them for her sake,
And for her approbation.

Refrain.

Will she? I'm waiting yet awhile
Until I've amassed a sufficient pile
For a castle in miniature;
And then I'll be off to my lass, I guess,
And ask her to rule it as its Princess
So long as our lives endure.

Refrain.

Eulalia

“SWEET-HEART” they call her, when we meet
Our men-friends sauntering down the street;
“We” means Eulalia and myself; -
I’m an old fellow; she’s an elf.

Refrain.

“Sweetheart,” “Sweetheart,” they gaily cry,
And then they smile and wave good-bye;
That’s now; but, I guess, some day
’Twill be—not a smile and a waved good-bye,
But—“Sweet-heart, love me or I die;”
For that’s what they mostly say.

It doesn’t move her much as yet—
That word “Sweetheart;” her thoughts are set
On other matters, such as toys,
And dolls that mimic baby-boys.

Refrain .

She’s two years old, and so, you see,
Has no care yet for galantries,
No use for a lover’s vows; and yet
She’s a bit, I reckon, of a coquette.

Refrain.

Natheless she keeps a special place
In her heart of hearts, and a special grace,
For daddy, and mummy, and grandmamma,
Aye, and for me—her grandpapa.

Refrain.

Twenty-six

Letty

WE sat on an ancient jetty—
Sally and Kate and I;
And, when I called Kate pretty,
Scorn flashed from Sally's eye;
Then, when to comfort Sally,
I said she was fair to see
As "Sally in our alley,"
Kate turned her back on me.

Next time I sought that jetty,
I left those girls behind,
And took with me dear Letty,
For her heart, I knew, is kind.
I said they were very pretty—
Those two; but she didn't care,
For I had my arms round Letty,
And was kissing her soft brown hair.

They're fairer in face than Letty
To the casual outward gaze,
But I reckon her most pretty
Who's pretty in thoughts and ways.
She's beautiful, is my Letty,
With the beauty of inward grace;
There's nothing in her that's petty—
Nothing that's mean or base.

The waves were gently lapping
That ancient jetty's side,
When, my arms about her wrapping,
I asked her to be my bride.
And they seemed to murmur lowly—
"So long as our waters roll:
So long as your love is holy:
You twain shall be one soul."

The Household Fly

OF pests which the primæval curse
Brought into our economy—
Snakes, gophers, bugs—not one is worse
Than the ubiquitous house-fly.
It spreads disease—that sums in brief
The tale of its delinquencies;
Therefore, that you may win relief
From this grave nuisance, swat the flies.

Refrain.

O swat the flies with all your might;
Swat them from morning unto night;
Swat them in kitchen and boudoir;
Swat them on ceiling and on floor;
Swat them on table and on bed;
Swat them till every fly is dead.

Yet in this creature, sooth to say,—
This plaguey worrying house-fly—
There is just one redeeming trait;
It makes a field for energy.
For, say you're growing over-stout
Yet hate to take hard exercise,
Here's a device will help you out—
Start a campaign against the flies.

Refrain.

You're far too lazy to get up
Some morn, and go about your chores;
What stirs you? Not your early cup
Of tea, but flies that end your snores.
Your afternoon siesta's been
Far too prolonged a lethargy;
A fly appears upon the scene,
And lo! you're all activity.

Refrain.

Or say you've been rejected, and
Scorned, by some girl you thought a duck;
You feel a bit dejected, and
Cheapened, and down upon your luck;
You mope; you need some occupation
To change your thoughts, to stop your sighs;
Jump up, and serve your generation,
Aye and yourself, by swatting flies.

Refrain.

Moods

I FISHED one day for the wily trout,
On a pine-girt mountain lake;
But, spite of my pains, my luck was out,
For my lures they would not take.
I tried them with worms, with spoons, with flies;
I offered them salmon-roe;
But, try as I would, I got no rise,
No bite; it was all no go.

I fished one day for my Lady's smiles,
But fished for them all in vain;
I tried on her all my arts and wiles,
To be met by a cold disdain.
I got no smile from her—much less
A kiss—tho' I pled and sighed;
She deemed my flatteries foolishness,
And put my appeals aside.

I fished that lake another day,
And caught quite a lot of fish;
They rushed at the bait, and I had as gay
A time as I well could wish.
On the morrow I found my Lady kind;
In the light of her smiles I basked;
She kissed me. How often? Well, never mind,
But she gave me each kiss I asked.

Twins

YOU may think it past conceiving—
Most anybody would—
But once two girls, believing
I was wooing one, I wooed.
Twin sisters they—the bother
Was this, and this the hitch—
They were so like each other,
I knew not which was which.

Now, whether it was Polly
Or Molly whom I kissed
To wonder now were folly;
'Twas all "love-in-a-mist."
But, when I asked fair Polly,
As I thought, to marry me,
It happened to be Molly
Who was sitting on my knee.

So my wife's name is Molly;
It's good enough for me;
I meant it to be Polly,
But that was not to be.
What's in a name? My Molly
Is as fair and sweet, you bet,
As Polly. What of Polly?
O, she turned Suffragette.

Claro

“‘M AN wants but little here below,
But wants that little strong”—
So someone burlesqued years ago
The words of an old song.
Reverse that maxim, and you have
A counsel wise and true,
Which will, if you're a smoker, save
You cash and trouble too.

Refrain.

O smoke tobacco by the ton,
If you like, whenever your work is done,
Or you for it have leisure;
But smoke it mild, and then you'll find
Your “Lady Nicotine” will be kind,
And give you only pleasure.

Tobacco, if you smoke it strong,
Intoxicates your soul;
It wrecks your nerve, and makes you long
To play the slacker's role;
Smoked mild it soothes, and the dreams it brings
Are uplifts of the heart;
They bid you aim at noble things,
And play the hero's part.

Refrain.

Miscella

Thirty-three

Ode to the West Wind

TYPHOONS, siroccos, and tornados—
In fact all gales of that description—
Rank with the vilest desperadoes,
And claim all forms of malediction.

They're bad 'uns; yet they can't be worse,
These—shall we call them devil's brooms?—
Than California's chiefest curse,
Mohave's villainous simooms.

They sweep down telephone-posts and trees;
Lift roofs from houses, crops from land;
Blast the young plants, worse than a freeze,
And block the roads with drifts of sand.

Some call them Santa Anas—why,
I know not, and I cannot guess;
Each blast is an atrocity,
And Santa Ana ought to bless.

Maybe that, as the Axein sea
Was called the Euxein, to appease it,
So too Mohave's infamy
Received a holy name to please it.

But naught appeases it; one foe
Alone, the West Wind, can defeat it;
Wherefore, O Western breezes, blow,
And make this blustering demon beat it.

Mostly ye are as temperate airs,
Which cool our brows and fan our faces;
But, when Mohave's desert swears,
Beat back with blasts its contumacies.

Thirty-four

All winds are spirits; this wind, I guess,
Comes from Gehenna's lowest pit,
And makes Mohave's wilderness
Its camping-ground—bad luck to it!

Can it be that a secret shaft
Runs up from this infernal den,
And that thro' it these blasts are waft
Abroad to vex the souls of men?

If so, the State Authorities
Should take prompt steps to choke this tunnel
By pouring adequate supplies
Of sand down a gigantic funnel.

The Santa Fe folk, after all,
Might, to help things, if they saw fit,
Block the Cajon Pass with a wall,
And let these Northers bust on it.

A mountain-high wall, strong and tough,
Proof against every storm and gale—
'T would give these wretched Northers snuff;
They'd sneeze their hearts out, and turn tail.

Short Measure

SONGS of two verses? Could the nightingale
Cut short her melody,
And in two stanzas gather up her wail,
Her passionate elegy?

Carols of soaring lark, and fluting thrush—
Are these wild strains too long?
Can we cry out to them, and say, "O hush!
Shorten, ye birds, your song?"

Do its five verses and long lines rule out
Our noble battle-hymn?
What should we call him but a shameless lout,
Who rent from it one limb?

Two verses are at time, no doubt, enough—
More than enough—they pall;
But are they worth, if fashioned of such stuff,
Music and voice at all?

Why do folk crave short songs? Because they want
To shorten the programme?
If that's the case, then let each singer chant
A two-lined epigram.

Is it to get as many names upon
The list as possible?
Then let 500 "Stars" each utter one
Curt monosyllable.

Or is it just the old Athenian craze
For hearing something new?
In that case let the crazed ones spend their days
And nights in some big Zoo.

Thirty-six

What's in a Name?

I ONCE asked a small company,
That sat around the fire,
What little gift to each would be
An object of desire.

Two children, two years old or so,
I questioned for a start;
Cookies and chocs, they let me know,
Came nearest to their heart.

Then next I asked a little lad
What sort of gift he'd like;
He promptly said that he'd be glad
To own a motor-bike.

A girl—she'd like a book to read;
A lady—well, she felt
That a new hat would meet her need,
Likewise a silver belt.

Lastly I asked old Uncle—would
A pipe be best or, maybe,
Cigars? "You'll pay?"—he answered—"Good;
I'D LIKE TO KISS THE BABY."

Well, well; so far as in me lay,
I met their wants, I think;
But O! why couldn't old Uncle say
He meant a long, long drink.

For I went hunting all around
To find some handy baby;
There wasn't a baby to be found,
And I got called a gaby.

What's more—what made me sure of this
Was Uncle's scornful mirth—
He wouldn't have given a babe a kiss
For all that he was worth.

Thirty-seven

Hostes Humani Generis

THIS earth of ours—what use has it
For “Reds,” for “Bolshevists,”
For “I-won’t-works?” Well, not a bit
More than for Huns’ mailed fists.

Man is a social being, set
In a community;
And common life claims, as a debt,
Work, Order, Sympathy.

As for these Bolshevists and Co,
Their object is to live
An others, not for them, and so
They want to grab, not give.

Aye, and this selfish spirit, run
Riot, breeds infamies;
Begets the Turk; begets the Hun:—
Rival atrocities.

Wherefore let those who claim to be
Industrials, and won’t work,
Find in some penitentiary
Tasks that they cannot shirk.

And let that progeny of Cain—
Huns, Reds, and Bolsheviki—
Be dumped in some far-distant main,
To hobnob with Auld Reekie.

Jingles

HYMNS, lyrics, epics of romance,
Tragedy, Comedy,
Love poems, Choral song and dance,
Sum up all Poetry.

* * * *

7 Muses ruled all Poetry—
Thalia and Melpomene ,
Erato and Terpsichore,
Polymnia and Euterpe,
And—queen of verse heroic, she—
Last, but not least, Calliope.

* * * *

Thalia's sock meant Comedy;
Melpomene's buskin, Tragedy;
Terpsichore was Muse of choirs;
Erato sang of love's desires;
Polymnia hymned the deities;
Euterpe fluted melodies—
Called "lyrics" nowadays, but they
Were "melics" in Euterpe's day.
As for Calliope—well, she
Claimed mighty Homer's fealty.

Poetry

THE verse of Homer, Virgil, Sophocles,
Aeschylus, Horace, Ovid, aye, and what
Shakespeare and Milton sang—such songs as these
Will let you know what's Poetry, what's not.

You'll get it anyhow stamped upon your soul
That Poetry has laws of symmetry—
Of rhythm and form—and gains thro' their control
A beauty that is of eternity.

Aye, and you'll find that Poetry is kin
To Music, kin too to the painter's art:
That each interprets each, and that they win
The world's acceptance as they touch its heart.

* * * *

Dry

“I DREAM of you all the night long;
I dream of you by day:” —
That was the lost explorer's song,
The 49er's lay.

What was it all about? A lass?
Gold? A lost pipe? A feast?
Well no; the motif of it was—
“OLD SCOTCH; A QUART AT LEAST.”

Wet

THE town embraced a jail (not used) for loons,
Post Office, Customs' House, a Picture Show,
Two Stores, bull-ring and cock-pit, and, by Jo!—
What made the place—just 42 saloons.

Forty

Si Jeunesse Savait

IF youth but knew
What old age knows,
What would it do,
Do you suppose?

Well, infantile
Precocity
Means infantile
Mortality.

So youth, made pre-
maturely wise,
Might win a pre-
mature demise.



Vox Populi

I CANNOT sing an old song, tho'
That's what I'd like to do;
Songs now must have two verses; so
Old-time songs are taboo.

I must obey; and, as the soul
Of wit is brevity,
So my song's soul—in fact, its whole—
Is “Howdy-do? Good-bye.”

Sweet

SWEET is the sunrise, when it's clear,
And sweet the sunset ray;
Sweet are the wild flowers that appear
When Spring has come-to stay.

Sweet are the dimples on the face
Of a small child at play;
And sweet a woman's smiles, in case
She gets her own sweet way.

Sweet is the taste of strawberries
And peaches, if they're ripe;
But sweetest of all sweet things is
The after-breakfast pipe.

Proverbs Annotated

“**S**LOW and steady wins the race.”
What! when raging lions chase?

* * * *

“A cat in pattens catches no mice.”
Who’d clog the cat? Who’d try it twice? Cp. “Bell-
the-Cat.”

* * * *

“A stitch in time saves nine.”
Bad rhyme: moral fine.

* * * *

“Birds of a feather flock together.”
Carrion crows know no such tether.

* * * *

“There’s many a slip ’twixt the cup and the lip.”
If there’s a risk, stoop down to sip.

* * * *

“More haste, worse speed.”
Aye, for speed claims heed.
The proverb may be Latinized—
Quo citius properas, tardius ibis eo.

* * * *

“A cat may look at a king.”
Some cats will do anything.

* * * *

“He goes a sorrowing, who goes a borrowing.”
The lender’s oft the one who does the sorrowing.

* * * *

“A rolling stone gathers no moss.”
What if it doesn’t? Where’s the loss?

* * * *

“All comes to him who has learnt to wait.”
Perhaps; yet it may come too late.

* * * *

“Well begun is half done.”
And half done is but begun.

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